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EXPERIMENTAL WEATHER MODIFICATION BILL ON FAST TRACK

By Rosalind Peterson
January 16, 2006
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U.S. [Senate Bill 517](#) and U.S. House Bill 2995, a bill that would allow experimental weather modification by artificial methods and implement a national weather modification policy, does not include agriculture or public oversight, is on the “fast track” to be passed early in 2006.

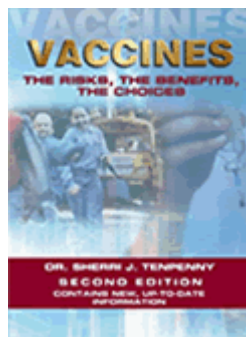
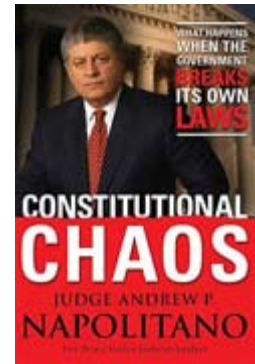
This bill is designed to implement experimental weather modification. The appointed Board of Directors established by this bill does not include any agricultural, water, EPA, or public representatives, and has no provisions for Congressional, State, County, or public oversight of their actions or expenditures.

Weather Modification may adversely impact agricultural crops and water supplies. If the weather is changed in one state, region or county it may have severe consequences in another region, state or county. And who is going to decide the type of weather modification experimentation and who it will benefit or adversely impact?

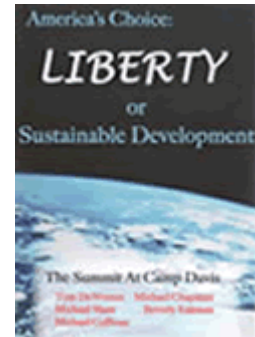
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This experimental weather modification bill will impact residents across the United States, not just in California. Many current and ongoing weather modification programs (47 listed by NOAA in 2005), including the one in Wyoming that is designed to increase the snowpack, may be diverting rainwater away from Oklahoma and Texas, two states that are currently fighting fires caused by a lack of rainfall. We have no idea what the unintended consequences of the Wyoming action or other experimental weather modification programs might be now or in the future.



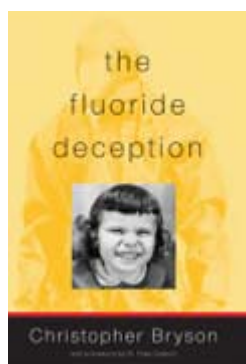
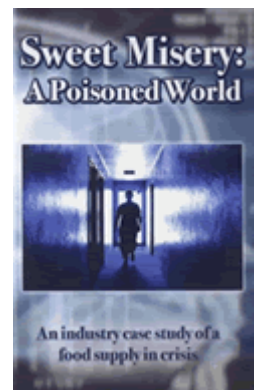
In addition to the experimental weather modification programs listed by NOAA, there are both private and ongoing government sponsored atmospheric testing and heating programs underway in Alaska and across the United States. Alaska Senator Stevens recently received \$50 million in funding for Alaska's atmospheric heating program.



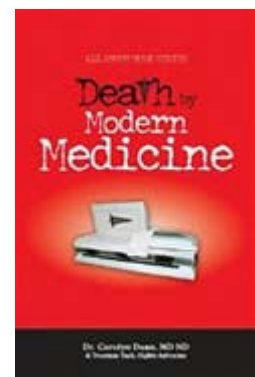
All of these unregulated, private, government, and public weather modification programs, may also have unintended synergistic effects. Senate Bill 517 does not address these issues but intends to implement more experimental weather modification programs without a national debate or public oversight.



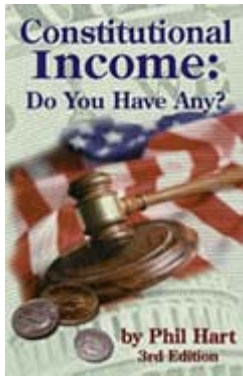
Artificial weather modification can impact all of us by reducing water supplies, changing agricultural crop production cycles, reducing crop production, and water availability. Since most experimental weather modification programs use chemicals released into the atmosphere the public could be subjected increasingly toxic or unknown substances that could adversely impact agricultural crops and trees.



Trimethyl Aluminum (TMA) and barium are just two of the toxic chemicals used in recent atmospheric heating and testing programs according to NASA. The Alaska [H.A.A.R.P.](#) atmospheric heating program may have the capability of changing the Jet Stream which could also change our weather.



Many private weather modification companies admit that precipitation effects may be positive or negative. Fog dispersal programs, using dry ice, liquid nitrogen, liquid propane or silver iodide may



improve visibility while adversely impacting Redwood Trees along the California coast by depriving them of needed water they derive from the fog.

The increasing use of varied chemicals like aluminum (coupled with increasing air pollution), can severely impact tree health by depriving trees of water and nutrients normally absorbed through their root systems.

The December 2005 Popular Science Magazine discussed a plan to use an oil slick to stop hurricanes without noting the adverse environmental impacts of the oil used to cover the ocean.

Popular Science also noted that a private company, Dyn-O-Mat, plans to purchase jets to drop thousands of pounds of a water absorbing chemical powder (unknown substance), into hurricanes to absorb moisture that may dissipate hurricanes. There is no agriculture oversight or public hearings to determine the consequences of this and other actions or to monitor or prevent adverse impacts of this chemical once it falls on the surface of the ocean or on land.

Alaska and other areas across the United States are beginning to feel the impacts of climate change. Enormous changes are being seen in the declining health of native plant and tree communities in many areas across the United States.

NASA noted in an October 2005 newsletter that increasingly persistent contrails are "...trapping warmth in the atmosphere and exacerbating global warming..." NASA goes on to note that: "...Any increase in global cloud cover will contribute to long-term changes in Earth's climate. Likewise, any change in Earth's climate may have effects on natural resources..."

Global dimming and persistent contrails that produce man-made clouds may have serious impacts on crop production. A recent corn crop study in Illinois shows that cloud cover reduces corn crop production while direct sunlight increases production. In addition, increasing man-made clouds may reduce the effectiveness of solar panels.

Gil Smolin, an Avian Bird Flu expert, noted on the



Ron Owens Show on KGO Radio (January 5, 2006), that the flu was spread more quickly in the winter when there was a "lack of sunlight". Would man-made clouds be contributing to the lack of sunlight which might cause the Avian Bird flu to spread more quickly at other times of the year?

Experimental weather modification programs could also exacerbate this problem by changing climate patterns and our weather.



Senate Bill 517 does not address any of these important issues. Its sole purpose is to establish an experimental weather modification policy without any agriculture or public oversight of private, military, and government programs. Without oversight or public hearings agriculture, our natural resources, and watersheds may be negatively impacted. And who will be responsible to determine the synergistic effects of these programs or pay for unintended disasters created by this experimentation. If these programs change growing seasons and interrupt the pollination process crop losses could be substantial.

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Please contact all of your elected local, state and federal officials to stop this bill in its present form. This bill needs to have appropriate agriculture and public oversight, with public hearings included, prior to any more experimental projects. We need a national dialogue on this subject before more experimentation takes place.

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Rosalind Peterson was born and raised on a working farm in Redwood Valley, California. The weather was the foremost factor in determining whether or not our tree crops produced fruit and nuts.

Between 1989 and 1993 Rosalind worked as an Agricultural Technologist for the Mendocino County Department of Agriculture. After leaving Mendocino County she took a position with the USDA Farm Service Agency as a Program Assistant in Mendocino, Sonoma, and the Salinas County Offices.

In 1995, she became a certified U.S.D.A. Farm Service Agency Crop Loss Adjustor working in more than ten counties throughout California. Many crop losses throughout the State can be attributed to weather related causes. Rosalind has a BA degree from Sonoma State University in Environmental Studies & Planning (ENSP), with emphasis on agriculture, watersheds, climate, and crop production.

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